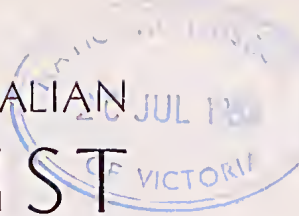


THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN NATURALIST



Vol. 14

August 22, 1980

No. 8

A GASCOYNE JUNCTION BIRD LIST

By MAX HOWARD, Roleystonc.

INTRODUCTION

The township of Gascoyne Junction is situated approximately 174 kilometres east of Carnarvon, with access by dirt roads, that are impassable after heavy rains. The Shire of the Upper Gascoyne consists of 55,734 square kilometres and has a population of some 300 people, of which about 30 people reside in the townsite of Gascoyne Junction. The townsite is situated near the junction of the Gascoyne and the Lyons rivers, and the main industry being the pastoral industry, with a small amount of mining. Average rainfall is approximately 200 mm a year, consisting of summer thunderstorms, and winter rains. The town water supply is drawn from beneath the Gascoyne river bed with the aid of pumps.

VEGETATION

The area in which observations were made consists of very open country, dotted with small scrub, bushes, and trees, River gums are plentiful on the river banks.

AREA OF OBSERVATION

Areas of observation include the townsite, and about a 10 kilometre radius of the townsite, river crossing, and about 6 kilometres up the river, east of the townsite, and the junction dam that is situated about 10 kilometres south-west of the townsite.

PERIOD OF OBSERVATION

Observations were carried out between February 20, 1979, and April 15, 1979, whilst the observer was relieving at the Gascoyne Junction Police Station. Two one-day observations were also carried out on January 21, 1979, and August 5, 1979.

The Gascoyne river flowed on February 15, 1979.

SPECIES LIST

- Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*). Common, small parties of up to 4 birds sighted.
- Little Grebe (*Podiceps novaehollandiae*). One bird sighted on two occasions at the Junction dam.
- Hoary-headed Grebe (*P. poliocephalus*). Common, observed in small numbers at the junction dam, and on the river, in breeding plumage.
- Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*). One bird sighted on most days on the river.
- Darter (*Anhinga rufa*). Observed on four occasions east of the river crossing.
- Little Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*). One bird seen on two occasions east of the river crossing.
- Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*). One bird sighted on two occasions near the river crossing.
- Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). One bird sighted on one occasion east of the river crossing.

- Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*). Very common, sighted on most days in small numbers, largest being 14 birds.
- White-necked Heron (*Ardea pacifica*). One bird sighted on two occasions near river crossing.
- White-faced Heron (*Ardea novaehollandiae*). Common on river in small numbers. Before the river flowed the largest number, eight birds, was sighted. After river flowed largest number sighted was four birds.
- Large Egret (*Egretta alba*). Common, never more than two individuals together.
- Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*). Sighted on three occasions on river, largest group sighted being two birds.
- Nankeen Night Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*). Common along river, eight birds largest number sighted, of which four were juveniles.
- Straw-necked Ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*). Observed on river on three occasions, largest number sighted, two birds.
- Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*). Observed on two occasions on river, largest number sighted being four birds.
- Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*). Common in small numbers on river.
- Mountain Duck (*Tadorna tadornoides*). One male and female sighted on river on one occasion.
- Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*). Found in small numbers on the river and junction dam.
- Grey Teal (*Anas gibberifrons*). The most common of the duck family in area and found in large numbers on the river, junction dam, and roadside clay pans.
- White-eyed Duck (*Aythya australis*). Observed on two occasions at the Junction dam, largest number observed four males and one female.
- Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*). Four birds sighted on the river on one occasion.
- Wood Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*). Five birds sighted on one occasion east of the river crossing.
- Whistling Kite (*Haliastur sphenurus*). Observed on one occasion flying along river bank near crossing.
- Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*). Common, one bird sighted on most days near river. Sighted on two occasions over townsite.
- Little Eagle (*Hieraetus morphioides*). One bird (light phase) sighted flying over the river near the crossing.
- Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*). Appears moderately common away from the town area.
- Nankeen Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*). Observed in small numbers in the flat open country. One bird with a broken wing located in townsite.
- Little Falcon (*Falco longipennis*). Observed on two occasions very early in the morning at the Police Station.
- Coot (*Fulica atra*). Very common since the river flowed on February 15, 1979.
- Red-kneed Dotterel (*Charadrius cinctus*). Noted as very common on January 21, 1979, before river flowed, but not sighted since.
- Black-fronted Dotterel (*Charadrius melanops*). Very common before river flowed but only sighted in small numbers since.
- Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*). Sighted in small numbers on river, largest number six birds.
- Avocet (*Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*). Two birds sighted on January 21, 1979.
- Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*). Three birds sighted east of the crossing.
- Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*). Observed in small numbers on the river.
- Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia striata*). Noted as common along the river banks, and open country bordering the river.
- Diamond Dove (*Geopelia cuneata*). Observed on two occasions, near the Junction dam.
- Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*). Very common.

- Little Corella (*Cacatua sanguinea*). Very common, in large numbers along the river.
- Galah (*Cacatua roseicapilla*). Common around townsite and river.
- Cockatiel (*Leptolophus hollandicus*). Four birds observed flying over the rubbish dump on one occasion.
- Port Lincoln Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius*). Common along river.
- Blue-winged Kookaburra (*Dacelo leachii*). Common along river.
- Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sancta*). Common along river.
- Rainbow-bird (*Merops ornatus*). Noted as common along river.
- White-backed Swallow (*Cheramoeca leucosterna*). Observed on two occasions along the river.
- Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*). Observed on one occasion near the river crossing.
- Fairy Martin (*Petrochelidon ariel*). Common along the river.
- Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*). Very common around townsite.
- Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) found in small numbers around town, river, and creeks.
- Crested Bell-bird (*Oreoica gutturalis*). Observed on one occasion singing from a small bush, near the junction dam.
- Willy Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*). Common in small numbers.
- Wedgebill (*Psophodes occidentalis*). Moderately common in the open scrub country.
- Cinamon Quail-thrush (*Cinclosoma cinnamomeum*). One bird sighted on road leading to junction dam.
- White-browed babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*). Moderately common in small numbers in country bordering the river.
- White-winged Wren (*Malurus leuconotus*). Common in the open scrub country.
- Banded White-face (*Aphelocephala nigricincta*). Observed eight birds on rocky country, south of the townsite.
- Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*). Common on the river, and around the junction dam. Always near water.
- Yellow-throated Miner (*Manorina flavigula*). Very plentiful along the river.
- Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*). Observed in small numbers around the junction dam.
- White-plumed Honeyeater (*Meliphaga penicillata*). Very common along the river and in the townsite. The most common of the honeyeaters.
- Zebra Finch (*Taeniopygia castanotis*). Common near the river, and the open country.
- Mudlark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*). Common along the river and townsite.
- Black-faced Woodswallow (*Artamus cinereus*). Observed in small numbers in the open scrub country.
- Pied Butcher-bird (*Cracticus nigrogularis*). Very common in townsite and in small numbers on the river. Both adult and immature birds sighted.
- Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*). Common around the town, and on the river.
- Crow? (*Corvidae*). I was unable to identify this species without a hand held specimen. However it was only sighted in very small numbers in the areas visited. Largest flock sighted was of four birds.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN THE ABUNDANCE AND FOOD PREFERENCES OF HONEYEATERS (*MELIPHAGIDAE*) AT WONGAMINE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By BRIAN G. COLLINS, Biology Department, Western Australian Institute of Technology, Hayman Road, Bentley, 6102, Western Australia.

ABSTRACT

Populations of honeyeaters were studied at Wongamine, W.A. for a period of two years from December, 1976. Seasonal changes in food preferences and abundance of the major species were recorded and related to the flowering phenology and nectar (energy) production by plants in the study areas. Although all honeyeaters seemed to be opportunistic feeders, they did show preferences for certain plants that seemed to be based largely on the total energy made available by these plants.